



The RoughRider RoundUp

204TH Support Battalion Newsletter – Camp Duke, Iraq

FEBRUARY 2006

From the Corral of Rough Rider 6

Folks, I wanted to pass on a couple of notes on how the Battalion is doing and tell you how proud I am of every one of our Soldiers.

First, as I am sure you all know, environmental leave (EML) is just around the corner. Our first group is scheduled to begin movement home around February 1st. Now I want all you loved ones back home to remember something when your soldier calls you from Iraq and says I will be home (fill in the date). There are at least half a dozen reasons why your soldier will not fly on time so you all need to be flexible. Here is a list of possible delays:

- a. Weather
- b. Mission Requirements
- c. Aircraft availability (due to competing demands or maintenance)
- d. Delay in returning soldiers getting back to us so I can't send new soldiers out
- f. Your loved one getting into trouble

Do not plan vacations with locked in reservations (my recommendation to you all) until after redeployment. Remember that your loved one is spanning time zones to come home. He or she will be pretty tired for the first couple of days so hold off the honey-do list at least 48 hours (this one is for my wife).

Secondly, the Battalion has been very busy and getting busier everyday. We are now getting our re-supply pushes every 3-4 days and we are pushing out support to the Brigade everyday. We usually have at least one convoy on the road daily. Our biggest challenge, other than the enemy, is fixing the equipment we received in theater. We inherited some very broken stuff and everyone is working hard to get it back to an operational status and keep it there.

And to close out my note, our hearts and prayers go out to our brothers in 2-8 Infantry Battalion, 1-67 Armor Battalion, and 3-16th Artillery Battalion for the recent losses they suffered in their formations. Keep us all in your thoughts and prayers everyday as we do the same, thanking God for the wonderful support we get from the home front.



Enjoying my new office here at Duke!

Until the next letter!

“Rough Rider 6”





'RoughRider 7'



From the 'Branding Iron' of Rough Rider 7

Hello Family and Friends of the Rough Rider Battalion.

The month of January has passed by quickly for the Soldiers; they are staying very busy conducting maintenance on equipment, qualifying with their weapons, and supporting daily camp requirements.

This past month we have broken ground on the new Gym/MWR facility. This facility should be completed by the end of February, if the weather permits. It will allow Soldiers to have more room to work out and participate in recreational activities. We have also broken ground on a new Chapel facility.

Our PX is fully operational and being run by two NCOs from the camp. The selection of merchandise is limited at this time because of the availability of products we receive from another camp. Hopefully within the next month or so we will be able to provide more variety to the Soldiers.

We are also in the process of improving the Internet Café and Phone Center. Your Soldier will have a better opportunity to contact family and friends back home once this project is completed. With the limited resources at our camp some projects take more time to complete than others. The Café/ Phone Center will remain open while construction is being completed.

Soldiers continue to receive mail and letters from home. Believe me when I tell you any type of package or letter from home brightens the day of your Soldier. Right now we receive mail approximately every 4 to 5 days; this process will improve when our mail is redirected in theater. Hopefully by the end of January we will be able to receive mail at least 3 times per week; this will increase the mail flow out of theater back to the States.

Thank you for the continued support of your Soldier.

Rough Rider 7



Meeting with a local merchant.



CSM Yelkovich with MG Thurman & LTC Geduldig.



'Trailblazer 6'



These are the 8 X 16' cans that we live in at Camp Duke, Najaf, Iraq!

Well it's time for another edition of the Trailblazer Newsletter. We have finally all arrived in the giant sand box in the East. At first look it was not much to behold, but Camp Duke has begun to grow on us. When we first arrived, we were housed in tents with cots to sleep on. It may sound like we had it rough, but each tent had air conditioning and heat throughout. Things are much better here than the crowded camps in Kuwait.

After about a month, the 155th Soldiers out of Mississippi finally packed up their gear and headed home. This was a very good thing for the Soldiers of the 204th, for as they moved out, we moved forward into their living spaces. Now we have some pretty decent living quarters with real beds and linens. In my 17 years in the Army, this is the best that I have ever lived in a field environment. Our quarters are 8 feet X 16 feet and can house two Soldiers. We have bunk beds in most of the "cans" as they are called by the Soldiers that live in them, and we argue and flip coins for the privilege of sleeping on the top bunk. For some of us that have been in the Army a few years, the bottom bunk is just fine. The thought of climbing in and out of an elevated bunk in the middle of the night without falling on ones head

is enough for me to concede that the 1SG can have the coveted top bunk. I am not sure that he saw it as a "perk", as he requested something lower to the ground after just one night. Having a bed and wall locker to call your own makes things quite a bit more hospitable and makes it feel like you have your own little piece of paradise.

We are constantly trying to improve our piece of the sand box. If we are not making our fighting positions better, then we are decorating the inside of our "cans" with lights and homemade Christmas ornaments for the holidays. Others decorated their offices to make them a little more festive and not so stuffy and business like.

Several other projects are going on here to make our lives better. Contractors have begun building our new recreation facility and a new chapel. When these building are completed, we will have one of the nicest camps in all of Iraq. Some visiting Soldiers have stated that they would like to spend their R & R at our camp because we have such a nice, clean and well equipped facility. It may be true that our camp is the envy of our counterparts over here, but a

lot of hard work goes into making it and keeping it this way.



Let's go SHOPPING!

It seems as though we have just arrived over here and we are already discussing leaves and R & R for our Soldiers. We all look forward to this chance to decompress and let our hair down. I know that when I finally get my chance to visit my loved ones I will be as excited as a little boy on Christmas Eve.

Our Prayers and best wishes go out to our Soldiers as they prepare to depart for this joyous occasion and we wish them all a safe and enjoyable trip.

The Trailblazers are working hard to keep all of the Soldiers safe and well taken care of. I hope that you enjoy some of the pictures that we have attached especially the one of the sandstorm that hit us. We are told that this was only a small taste of what is to follow later this month. We are not looking forward to that. There are also some pictures of our friends at our Iraqi Bazaar, our own little market in the sand. The locals that run the shops are all very friendly and are eager to please us with their goods. Many good friends are made in this area and we are all able to learn a little more about each other and we find that we are not so different after all.

Until next time, best wishes from 1SG Kenworthy, CPT McWane and our families. Please remember our Rear Detachment team during this deployment for they have one of the biggest jobs of all, taking care of our loved ones as we do our duty half way around the world. Please enjoy the photographs that follow.

Cherish the fun times that we have had and see you on the high ground.

“Trailblazer 6”



Welcome, My Friends!



Sandstorm at Camp Duke!



'OUTLAW 6'



This month has been a busy one for the Outlaws; all the mission areas in the company are going full speed and the systems and daily battle rhythm is starting to become predictable. We are doing logistic convoys daily and everything has been successful and safe; this has allowed us to provide outstanding support to the 2nd Brigade and keep the overall mission on its intended course.

The Iraqi market on the base is providing the Soldiers with some comfort items to include blankets, electronics, movies, and they can get just about anything we request. Soldiers have access to phones and internet which has also helped keep morale high during whatever personal time may be allotted between missions. We received the canvas with the messages from the families and hand prints; the Soldiers greatly appreciated seeing that and we keep it hung up inside the company command post.

Included are pictures taken over the past month; we have had multiple re-enlistments and promotions during January. The remaining pictures are just a few that the Soldiers wanted to send back. Each month I will continue to send several pictures back home that match the current theme of what's going on here in the desert.

I hope that all the families and friends back home are in good health and doing well. Know that the Soldiers here on FOB Duke are

doing well and are accomplishing great things; you should all be very proud of your Soldiers and loved ones that are deployed. If there is anything you would like from us please let the FRG leaders know and I will do everything I can to get it done. I thank you for your continuing support for all of us in the Outlaw family. Be safe and take care.

Sincerely,

CPT Andy Clinkscapes
"Outlaw 6"







BLACK KNIGHTS



Knights make some New Year's Resolutions!

Greetings, I hope everyone back home had a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year. As I sit here writing this article I realize that exactly eight weeks ago today, 109 "Black Knight" Soldiers departed Fort Hood in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Time is flying by for us here at Camp Duke; it feels like only yesterday that I penned last month's newsletter article. The days and nights are very busy for the Soldiers of Bravo Company. On average we are working a fourteen hour day and for some folks it is a fourteen hour night. The company is running 24 hour maintenance operations seven days a week. Even though we are working at a hectic pace, we are still finding time to relax and enjoying different pastimes. Here are some of the highlights: a NCO from GSE is the two time defending chess champion on Duke. His title will again be on the line on January 24th, when he defends it against all challengers at the Moral, Welfare, & Recreation (MWR) tent. Another NCO from GSE is the "Madden 06" champion. Every Sunday evening a group of diehard Steelers fans have been gathering to watch as the Steelers bid to win Superbowl XL taking place in Detroit, MI on February 5th. In an effort to incorporate more of the company into the newsletter, this month we will be featuring some of our New Year's resolutions.

Here are the top six New Year's resolutions for '06:

1. Quit smoking.
2. Lose weight or gain more muscle mass.
3. Call or email home more often.
4. Save money.
5. Stop cursing.
6. Stop eating ice cream from the DFAC.

Additionally, the Soldiers of Bravo Company participated in the Battalion's combat patch ceremony on January 18th. The ceremony was designed to both recognize the contributions our Soldiers are making in Iraq and the history behind the combat patch. For some Soldiers it was their first combat patch ceremony and for others it served as reminder of previous combat patch ceremonies. In the



near future, we will begin sending some Soldiers on EML leave. The first of these should be arriving in the first weeks of February and continue on through the months ahead.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for their continued support, especially for the incredible amount of

mail we receive, both boxes and letters. I hope everyone has a wonderful couple of weeks until our next newsletter is published.

‘Black Knight 6’





'ARCHANGEL 6'

ARCHANGELS LAUNCH INTO THE NEW YEAR



Since the New Year is already upon us, we take note that it came and went without the fanfare of times past. There were no grandiose parties. There was no counting the seconds as the ball dropped in the Big Apple...and for all those who would have popped open the bubbly, there was nothing to cause you to wake with a tremendous and aching headache. Nonetheless, 2006 promises to be a busy and exciting year for all the Archangels!

At this point, we're fairly settled in to our new environment and we have established the "resemblance" of a routine.



Fortunately for us, we're able to conduct physical training five days per week, maintain a decent work schedule, and get enough "quality" sleep to ensure that we're alert and responsive to any "surprises" that may arise. Our living

conditions are not so bad. Of all the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) within our Brigade footprint, our FOB is by far the best! Most of the time we're able to take hot showers, we utilize clean and functional latrines



(bathrooms), we have a 24-72 hour turnaround on our laundry turn-ins, and best of all...we don't have to sleep with our faces in the mud. What more can you ask for!

In addition, we have had promotions from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant, Private First Class to Specialist, and Private to Private First Class. For those family members affected by these recent advancements, congratulations on your promotions, enjoy the extra money. It is well deserved and well earned. Also, we have had a number of Soldiers to reenlist in order to remain in the U.S. Army, with one of our stellar Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) reenlisting to remain until her retirement date! Congratulations to all those who have been recognized for their promotion potential and those who have decided to remain in uniform. We commend all of our personnel for their commitment during this time of national conflict.



**Archangels, Rough Riders,
Warhorse, Ironhorse!**



'RoughRider Cross'



BROKE GROUND FOR THE NEW CHAPEL HOOAH!

Greetings from the sand blown, cool desert regions of Iraq! Hard to believe it's time for another newsletter, but I guess that means 1 month closer to coming home to loved ones. That's a wonderful thing.

I have been very encouraged with the men and women of the 204th Support Battalion. They work long hours, long days and long nights. The good thing about being busy is that it helps make the time pass quicker.

I have started a series of messages on the life of Nehemiah. What tremendous lessons we can learn from him in our everyday lives. His example helps us to know the importance of caring for those around us, for praying for those around us. He emphasized caring for family and friends that were hundreds of miles away! He was a man who prayed and fasted to seek God's direction in his life. Each day I am reminded of how I need to seek His direction and guidance.

**SEND PACKAGES TO
CH(CPT) JAMES LESLIE
204 SB, 2BCT, 4ID(M)
UNIT #: 43501
APO-AE 09329-3501
Care Package: Please write Male,
Female, or just soldier**

We have some wonderful news! They broke ground here on the 19th of January 2006 for a new chapel. It will at least double the size of our present facility. What a blessing! We are

looking forward to providing more Bible studies and opportunities for Soldiers to learn more about their faith.

We are also working on getting our Internet Cafés up and running more efficiently. That will make it easier for spouses and friends to communicate with the Soldiers here. We may even have the opportunity to add some webcams so we can see our families on a more regular basis.

I have been promised many care packages for the Soldiers here. I am looking forward to passing out dozens and dozens of packages to our men and women. One lady wrote recently that her church is sending 25 packages! Thank you for helping with that project. We have had schools send us letters as well. I was excited to read some of the things these children wrote to us. I know it put a smile on my face!

As your Chaplain, please don't hesitate to let me know if you need me to talk to a specific Soldier here. Confidentiality is very sacred. My desire and prayer is to have everyone in the 204th return home in good health, both physical and spiritual health!

Chap lain Leslie